

PASSING THROUGH THE FIRE.
From Rev. Jas. Ticey, to one of the Editors of the
"Vt. Chronicle," dated Singapore, Feb. 22d, 1836.

Eight or nine months ago I wrote you some account of an idolatrous scene which I had just witnessed—the swinging high in the air on hooks fixed in the flesh of the back, and dragging iron rods through the sides. Last evening I witnessed another specimen of the cruel reign of Satan, and will give you some account of it. It has been described by others, but to you it seems more real in consequence of my having seen it with my own eyes.

I was not aware that any thing uncanny was going on, till after dinner one of the family came into my room inquiring what it was that was moving along a distant street. I looked out, saw the street crowded with people, and a large car with a canopy, &c. not less than twenty feet high, being drawn out towards an open field, where I was told the ceremony of passing through the fire was to be performed. Wishing to see for once this new form of heathenism, I took my hat and walked to the place. An immense multitude had assembled there, and on my arrival I found that a fire had been burning long enough to reduce a large quantity of wood to coals. The unconsumed brands had been taken out and laid aside; and the remaining coals were glowing with their hottest heat.

Several men were levelling them and preparing them for the ceremony. I stopped a moment on the side-walk, and then passed to the other. A way was going. I observed one of the men who were engaged about the fire so heated that he called for water, a large bucket of which was turned upon his head. A moment after I saw another of them fallen upon the ground—faint from exertion and the heat of burning coals, strongly reminding me of those who approached Nebuchadnezzar's furnace.

The fire was about 18 or 20 feet long, by 9 or 10 broad, and 6 inches deep. The coals were broken small, and all foreign bodies, such as stone or unburnt wool, carefully removed.

After some time a kid was brought to the head of the pile of coals, washed with water poured all over it, its head severed from its body by a single blow, and its body then drawn three times round the fire as fast as a man could run with it.

The devotees then approached with music, and confusion and tumult. Two or three of them ran through the fire without much apparent difficulty, though their feet must, I think, have been burned more or less, probably some of them badly. Then came one who stumbled at the head of the fire and plunged headlong into the middle of it; then half raising himself he fell again, and before he got through, was awfully burned. But instead of the hand of mercy being extended for his relief, as soon as he had escaped the fire, his heartless countrymen fell upon him with anger at his failure, and beat him so severely that it is said he is doubtful whether he will recover. Another almost walked through the glowing coals; and others followed, sometimes several at once. In all, more than twenty men testified in this way their faithfulness in the service of Satan.

A soon as they were done, the coals were thrown upon the fire so as to diminish its heat, and allow its being approached. The deluded multitude then came forward and took a handful of the coals or ashes and rubbed some of it upon their foreheads (surely a mark of the beast) and other parts of their faces and persons. Among these I observed a man who is tall and dignified in his person, and possessed a considerable degree of intelligence; and is now building a house for our mission. It is not merely the uneducated and inferior part of the heathen that believe in the virtue of such hellish ceremonies, but the best among them, also. I saw hellish; for taking the appearance of the multitude, the fire, the torture, the noises and gestures, the scene seemed to be more perfect than any thing I ever saw before. As a brother remarked on coming from the place, "it seemed as if they wished to outdo hell."

The Reports were followed by addresses from several gentlemen, among whom were Dr. Patterson, of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and President Fiske of the Wesleyan University, Conn.

The evening was spent by a very large company of friends of the Society at the country seat of the President Tronchin, in Christian intercourse. The following subjects were discussed at length. 1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of publicity, through the press, in regard to labor for the promotion of religion, and how may the disadvantages be avoided? 2. Are there no doctrines which are too generally neglected in preaching; and what are they?—The meeting was closed with prayer and thanksgiving, especially on behalf of Switzerland and France.

Reader!—we ought to have said something of the labors—the faith, the hope, the zeal, the courage of these men. The Lord in the midst of abounding infidelity, error and wickedness, in the way of practical appeal to you. But we have no room. Make the application, we beseech you, before God, for yourself.—*St. Chronicle.*

BOSTON RECORDER.

Friday, August 26, 1836.

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

Increased Contributions Needed to Sustain the Operations of the Board. No. 3.

The patrons and friends of the Board, whose attention has been directed to the causes of its present pecuniary embarrassment, have no doubt remarked that it does not grow out of any diminution in its receipts.

These exceed the receipts of any former year, by more than ten thousand dollars.

But while this is true, the uneducated and inferior part of the heathen, the safety of this office is owing to the course he took in this matter. We do not say that; but if he says true, then what a disgraceful truth to St. Louis!

We have never heard of any threats to pull down our office which did not originate with his *countrymen*—mark that.

So true is it that Popery in its very essential principles is incompatible with regulated civil or religious liberty. Our warning voice on this subject is lifted up in vain, but of those who now hear it, will live to mourn over their present incredulity and indifference.

In his answer to the remarks of the N. Y. American, Judge Lawless intimates that the safety of this office is owing to the course he took in this matter. We do not say that; but if he says true, then what a disgraceful truth to St. Louis!

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But there are places where a courage that God only can give is demanded to continue this work. We allude to the large cities, and especially to Lyons. Gentlemen, were you to follow a few moments these dear colporteurs, you might see the visit to 20, 30 houses, and often entire streets in which are hundreds and thousands of laborers, blinded by the most dreadful infidelity, and returning to those who would speak to them of Jesus, to offer an answer than sarcasm and blasphemy. O that Christians would take pity on these souls, and are rushing on, through want and wretchedness, to a fearful retribution hereafter!

Interesting statements were made respecting the establishment of religious libraries in many places, and among others, at Algiers and at Dely Brahim, in Africa.

That part of the Report which related to preaching, furnished notices of the various stations occupied by the Society in places where the pure gospel has not been heard since the early days of the Reformation. "You see, gentlemen," adds the Report—"that in less than three years, 15 houses of prayer have been opened, and three schools established. This were little, but it is the work of man; but the Lord had been pleased in his great mercy, to show that it is doing, by calling up in the bosom of these infant churches a life and activity not always to be found among those who have long heard the gospel message."

The Report examines various difficulties and objections that the Society has to encounter. Among others is that of want of funds. To this a single word is a sufficient answer:—"Until the reign of the pious and unfortunate Louis XVI, chains, dungeons, and violent death were the curse of France, and the only honor that the kings of France had ever deigned to bestow on preachers of the gospel." Down to the beginning of the present century, the reformed religion had been sometimes tolerated, but never aided from the national treasury; and it is only since 1802 that the Protestant clergy have received salaries from government. This is the only business of this Report to inquire whether this change has been beneficial to the churches or not; we only state the facts. Well, then, gentlemen, where is the treasury that, for a hundred and fifty years, sustained among a ministry far more numerous than we now have, a ministry so worthy of admiration for fidelity and devotion to the glory of their Master? That treasury, gentlemen, still exists unimpaired, and will never be exhausted; it is the

treasury of God who hath promised—of God, who puts it into the heart of the Christian to preach the gospel, who gives him courage to brave suffering and death, who converts the heart and disposes it to give."

The Report of the Theological School was then read. "Never"—says the Report—"never, perhaps, since the first establishment of Christianity, has there been in the church such a want of preachers of salvation as at this moment. The world begins to feel its wants. The Report just read proclaims them; the Evangelical Society of France echoes the same." It is a strange mistake to suppose that this school was established for a merely negative end, in the spirit of opposition, and to make war on some other institution. We know that the soldier of the cross must not waste his power in useless skirmishing; that he must press onward to the establishment of the truth in the harvest. All the means of instruction and impress must be multiplied. In this respect, spiritual husbandry resembles the culture of the earth. The husbandman has need to increase his expenditures, in seed time and harvest, just in proportion to the extent and fertility of the field.

These principles are obviously just. In the present case correspond perfectly with them. Taken as a whole, the missions of the Board have been more prosperous during the year that has just closed, than in any former year. Our brethren have felt their hearts encouraged and their hands strengthened. A wide and effectual door has been opened for the publication of the gospel in the regions round about the principal missions of the Board, and upon several of them divine influences have come down, "as rain upon the noon grass." At such missions the means of usefulness previously employed have been found inadequate to the increased demand, and requests have been earnest and frequent for more missionaries, more teachers and schools, and facilities for greatly increased activity in the mission presses. Would it not have been ungrateful to the Saviour, and unkind to our brethren, if the Committee had turned a deaf ear to such requests? What friend of the cause would not have pronounced them unfaithful to their trust, if they had done so? Who that loves the Saviour would not prefer to double his contribution, no matter how it cost self-denial, rather than to say to the brethren, "Hold your hands, you are expecting and attempting too much, the churches are not willing to sow the good seed nor to gather in the harvest, so rapidly!" To flourish among us, theology wants two things—authors and readers!

"But in justice, we ought to acknowledge that there has been some little progress. The dogmatic system of 1790 is decidedly on the decline. *Rational Christianity*, as it miscalled itself, which did not go beyond the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and some notion about a divine messenger named Jesus, has gone silently to its grave. A kind of medley between Arianism and Socinianism that succeeds, being to be ashamed of itself. For a moment after I saw another of them who were engaged about the fire so heated that he called for water, a large bucket of which was turned upon his head. A moment after I saw another of them fallen upon the ground—faint from exertion and the heat of burning coals, strongly reminding me of those who approached Nebuchadnezzar's furnace.

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St. LOUIS OBSERVER.

The next night, as we learn by the papers, the office of the Observer was broken up by a mob. The fragments of the furniture were carried to Alton, and there another mob destroyed them. A meeting of the citizens of Alton passed resolutions condemning this last outrage, and stating that, they believed, not more than eight persons were engaged in it. Mr. Lovejoy, the editor of the Observer, is a decided opposer of slavery, but dissents, on important points, from the Abolitionist party, and has always protested against being counted as one of them. He has spoken very decidedly against slavery, as a system, and of the wickedness of upholding it, and probably this is one cause of the outrage; but popery and rum, both of which find him a dangerous assailant, had quite as much to do with it as slavery. The pretence that he was an Abolitionist was the excuse, and not the cause, of the riot.

We never learned from the Bible, that "withering scars" is one of the Christian graces. It appears to us to be an unwholesome feeling, and the work of promoting it to be a sinful employment. If, as we fear is the fact, any Americans caught that feeling from Mr. Thompson while he was here, or in any way have come to sympathize with him in it, we hope they will soon repeat. We believe, too, that, in that, Mr. Thompson could get "the whole world, pagan and Christian," to commit it with all their hearts, would utterly fail to abolish slavery. This is, and always has been, one important difference in sentiment between him and us.

The business of engaging the British government in the work of abolishing slavery in this country, Mr. Thompson may go about as soon as he pleases. He may get up some excitement on the subject, by lecturing certain classes of British subjects; but the government of that country will not be made foolish enough to take that course. By engaging actively in that enterprise, he will lose favor with very many of his American supporters.

The British people, brought by "a system of agitation" to look upon Americans with "withering scars," and the British government, at the bidding of those who rest on no proof whatever. Is he quite sure that he did not thereby contribute his note to the mass of causes which produced the late mob in his country?

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produced. If this was insufficient, it would be the duty of Britain to consider well whether it was right to hold the destiny of the slave of America in her hand and sold it accordingly. It would be the duty of the friends of the slave to point out

